

## *Kacey*

### *A Christmas Story of Sorts*

The rescue person you thought lived in the house where you dumped me and my babies doesn't live there any more. She was evicted due to poor rescue practices and diseased dogs.

I had 13 babies in that box you dumped me in. One of my babies died there. I tried to keep them all warm, but I wasn't warm myself. I tried to feed them all, but since you hadn't fed me in a very long time, I didn't have enough of myself to make milk for them.

I feared more would die, but Santa came. Well, he looked like Santa to me. He was a big man with a beard. He was riding a very noisy machine and he had several dogs tied to it, making them run. Some of the dogs looked like me. The dogs kept alerting to the area that you had left me, so Santa stopped his machine and found us. At first I didn't understand why he left, didn't he want to help me and my babies?

Soon he returned with another man in a pickup truck. They put a leash around my neck but I was too weak to stand, much less walk. When you go as long without food as I have and then give birth to 13 babies, there isn't any energy left with which to stand. The new man picked me up and put me in his truck. I noticed he had tears in his eyes. I didn't understand why he was crying, but he kept telling me that I was a good girl and he was going to help me. I didn't want to believe him; I had believed you all those times about food and shelter and love, and you let me down. I knew this man would probably let me down, too, and worse he was leaving my babies in the box -they would all die!

After I settled in the warmth of the truck I noticed the Santa man had placed the box with my babies on the seat. I could hear my babies crying for me. How I wished I had milk to give them. How I wished I could keep them warm.

The Nice Man and the Santa Man put my babies and me in a round box inside a wire kennel run. I didn't know how long or big the run was for several days as I was too weak to stand, much less venture out. The place they put us in was inside a warm building and the Nice Man turned on a special light over the box for my babies and me. It was so nice and warm. I noticed there was a door that went to the outside and I could see we were high up off the ground. For the first time I felt safe and warm. I fell asleep with my babies snug against me. I thought we might all die, but at least we were now warm and safe.

Soon I was awakened by another man. Nice Man kept calling him Doc. Doc Man checked me all over and then examined all my babies.... I noticed the baby that died wasn't with the rest of us and then I heard Nice Man tell Doc Man how one baby had died and he had buried it. It was better than letting the coyotes or

hawks get his poor little body, which is what I was afraid would happen to all of us.

Doc Man gave me several shots, but I never even whimpered or cried. He told me that soon I would have milk to give my babies and he gently held each one. I don't know exactly what he did while he held them, but I saw him put a tube down their throats, and when he placed them back with me, their bellies were bigger. I just wanted to sleep the long eternal sleep that I had heard about. I wanted to be with my baby that died.

Doc Man told Nice Man how to make up some food for me before he left. It was dark and warm in my room. The only light was from the light above my box - it was dim but very warm. I fell back to sleep and dreamed I was running with my lost babe.

Next thing I knew the bright lights were on again and a Lady was with Nice Man, standing by my box and crying. Then she yelled at Nice Man, but I didn't understand all her words, and it scared me. Nice Man talked softly to her and finally she nodded her head. She opened the door to my box and stroked my bony head, whispering to me that I was a good girl. How I longed to hear those words from YOU. Lady sat on the edge of my box with the door open for a long time while Nice Man mixed up food for me. I tried, but I couldn't eat the food - it was too much for my depleted system. My body was shutting down. Lady held the water dish for me and I took a drink of cool water. I started to drift off with my head on the edge of the bowl so Lady moved the bowl and guided my head down and placed it between my paws. She stayed for a long time and just petted me and whispered to me. I don't remember what she said.

All that first night Nice Man was with my babies and me. I could feel some stirring down in my tummy area and I knew I finally had some milk for the babies. Nice Man made all my babies suckle from me and he stayed with us all night, petting me and putting small amounts of water and food on my tongue. I swallowed most of it, but some spilled out of my mouth. Nice Man never yelled at me or hit me for allowing the water and food to spill out; he just wiped it up to keep my babies dry. I slept fitfully.

Next morning Lady came and found Nice Man sleeping slumped over my box. She touched his shoulder and he awoke with a jump. I saw them count my babies and pick each one up. Lady brought that tube in and together they picked up my babies and when they returned them their bellies were full. Lady checked my tummy and said my milk was coming in. She also checked my teeth and gums like Doc Man had done. Lady dribbled water into my mouth when she saw that I couldn't hold my head up. She whispered to me and it sounded so good to hear a gentle voice. I guess I fell asleep listening to her because the next thing I knew Nice Man was gone and Santa was there with Lady.

Santa stood outside my run and talked to Lady. I heard him ask her if I would make it, and heard her say she didn't know. Lady had brought some warm liquid that was sweet and spooned it into my mouth. I wanted to live for my babies; they needed their momma, so I swallowed most of the sweet liquid. Lady just quietly

wiped up anything I spilled. Lady was there for a long time, spooning this liquid and then water into my mouth. She would leave for a while and then come back in a short time. Each time she left she would tell me once again that she loved me. Imagine that, someone loved me. Is that why these people were being nice to me? I couldn't imagine how Lady could love me as I was caked with afterbirth and blood - I was dirty everywhere. Everytime she came though, Lady would spoon me food and water and tell me I was beautiful and she loved me. And each time she came back she would bring a warm washrag and clean just a small part of me off. She told me while she was doing this that my babies needed me to be clean, that they needed their momma. Lady asked me about names. The names you called me weren't nice and Lady seemed to know this, so she asked if she could call me "Kacey". I liked that name and picked my head up ever so slightly when she said it, so Lady said that from now on I would be "Kacey".

Lady fed me like this all day, and by evening I was feeling a little stronger. I could hold my head up and I would eat a few bites of the food that Lady brought for me, on my own. When I was tired, she would spoon it for me again until I couldn't take anymore and would move my head away. Lady never made me feel bad when I couldn't eat any more food. She just would say, "It's all right Kacey, I love you, you rest now".

Later that evening Lady brought another Man over and he fed me, too, and both of them examined my babies. Man came over every few hours all that night. By the next morning I was feeling a little stronger and could now eat all the food that Lady brought me, all on my own. I heard her tell Santa, who stopped by frequently to look at us, that she thought I was going to make it, she knew I was fighting. She knew I wanted to live for my babies.

Lady said it looked like my babies were growing. She checked my milk and said it looked fine. Lady would pick up some of my babies and give them more milk when she came. Lady offered me the baby milk, but I wanted my babies to have it so I refused it and just ate the food Lady would bring me. Lady came every little while this second day and every time she came she brought me food and made me eat a little and she fed my babies. By evening I was feeling strong enough that I got up on my own and explored a little.

The door on our box led outside. The run we were in was not real big, but it was nice. It was off of the ground and it was safe, even for my babies when they got big enough to toddle around. Lady came and found me lying inside my run but outside of the box holding my babies. She was smiling and happy. But walking around like that had worn me out and I couldn't eat the food that Lady brought me. I could see she was sad and she told Santa that she was worried. She told him to call Doc Man and I know she talked to him. I was just too tired, but I had no way to tell her that.

Lady left with tears in her eyes and when she came back she had Man with her again. Again Man was with me on and off all night and he brought me food, which I ate. By now I was hungry and really I gobbled the food up. Man helped feed my babies, too.

Late that night Nice Man came back and he petted me and whispered to me. He said he would be back in the morning.

Lady and Man came first thing in the morning and they found that one of my babies was sick. I had pushed it aside, as I didn't want whatever she had to hurt the other babies. I had been standing up pacing, waiting for them to help my baby. Man immediately picked up the baby and cradled it gently in his hands. Lady got that tube out again and did her thing with it and then she said she was calling Nice Man. Nice Man came and they took my baby away. I thought Baby had died, but apparently they put her somewhere close and they stayed with her for a long time. Finally they left baby and me. Man fed me and petted me during this time, but I still couldn't see my sick baby.

Nice Man came back a short time later and petted me, checked my other babies and then checked on the sick baby. I could faintly hear my sick baby cry. As always, he brought more food. I sure surprised him, as when he went to spoon it to me, I just gobbled it up. He told me I was a Good Girl. God how I love those words! Why couldn't YOU say that to me?

Lady and Man came in a short time later and I could hear my sick baby crying loud. They called Nice Man and again I couldn't see what they were doing to my sick baby. But I heard them say baby would make it. Nice Man came and took a couple more babies and fed them with the tube. He continued to do this each time he came with food for me. Later that evening he put my sick baby back in with me and the other babies, and sick baby looked great! I think these people work miracles! Maybe it's 'cause they work for Santa?

I didn't see Lady or Man much during the next couple of days. Doc Man stopped by and he said I was going to be okay. Santa stopped by from time to time also, always with a kind word for me.

Now a week has passed. My babies aren't all as strong as they could be yet, and I am still being fed every few hours. But I have regained some of my strength. Nice Man said my milk has come in nicely and my babies are getting fat.

Lady come by today and was amazed at how well I am doing. She had tears in her eyes, but this time she smiled at Nice Man and petted me and gave me a kiss. Nice Man told her that several of my babies already have homes, out of the 13 of us total (me and my 12 babies) he has homes for 8 of us, including me...and we've only been here a week!

They said once my babies are big enough to be without me, I will go live with Doc Man, and some of my babies will live with people that work for him. Santa will take a baby for his housedog and Nice Man's wife will take one as her housedog and someone she knows will take one, too. Lady was happy, she said she couldn't take my babies, or me but she knew that we'd all have wonderful lives and she was proud of me. Imagine that, PROUD of me!

Anyway, I wanted you to know that even though you left me and the babies for dead, even though you nearly starved me to death, even though you told me I was

"no good" and a "bad dog," Santa still found me and brought me the best gift of all: humans that really care.

I still hope he will bring you something nice too... Just not another life to abuse.

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